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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/AGS, EUR/PGI, G/TIP, DRL/IL, INL/HSTC, AND PRM

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SUBJECT: TIP: Follow-Up on Pre-World Cup Raids in State of Hesse

REF: A) Frankfurt 3313; B) Frankfurt 0889

Sensitive but unclassified; not for internet distribution.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In pre-World Cup raids against forced prostitution and trafficking in the German state of Hesse on May 10, German law enforcement officials detained 74 persons. Police and NGOs are now working with prostitutes to identify trafficking victims and build cases against pimps/traffickers. Police are convinced their efforts are successful and say media predictions that large numbers of foreign prostitutes would come to Germany for the World Cup were grossly exaggerated. NGOs are satisfied with police cooperation, but some say "dragnet" raids and routine police actions to check brothels are not the best tool to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). END SUMMARY.

By the Numbers

2. (SBU) According to contacts from the Hesse state Office of Criminal Investigation (LKA/Landeskriminalamt) and Frankfurt police, hundreds of police and other state officials checked streets where prostitutes are permitted to work and raided private apartments during daytime hours May 10, followed by raids of major brothels that evening. Law enforcement officials methodically checked establishments, looking for signs of illegal prostitution and trafficked persons (ref A). Police told ConGen officials identity checks are one of the tools they use to identify potential trafficking victims and minors working as prostitutes.

Detailed figures for the raids by region (Hesse LKA numbers):

Southern Hesse: 484 police involved -- 51 prostitutes placed in protective custody

Central Hesse: 150 police involved -- 12 prostitutes placed in protective custody

Northern Hesse: 100 police involved -- 11 prostitutes placed in protective custody (7 Romanians, four Russians)

Eastern Hesse: 76 police involved -- no persons detained

What Happens To Victims?

3. (SBU) For the seventy-four women taken into police custody, detention by police was the first step in a process designed to protect them and identify/prosecute traffickers. In a private meeting with Consulate representatives, Frankfurt Police President Axel Thiel and investigator Wolfgang Meyer emphasized that police throughout the process treat detained prostitutes as victims, not criminals. Meyer pointed out that many women do not initially see themselves as victims but come to that realization after counseling and assistance. Although some counseling is provided by police

social workers, most is provided by NGOs, which cooperate closely with police to ensure victims receive counseling and legal assistance. Following investigations and court proceedings, women can, in some cases, return to their home countries. Others obtain legal resident status in Germany. Police work with NGOs to persuade victims to testify against their pimps/traffickers. According to Barbara Dierichs, Chairperson of Franka (an NGO in northern Hesse), the organization is currently counseling ten of the eleven women who were detained in northern Hesse.

Frankfurt Police President

¶4. (SBU) Frankfurt Police President Thiel expressed frustration at negative media reports on TIP and prostitution in Germany. Regarding the large-scale raids on May 10, Thiel said police findings demonstrate there has been no substantial increase in TIP and that the oft-repeated figure of 40,000 prostitutes converging on Germany for the FIFA World Cup is a gross exaggeration. Thiel conceded that in an operation of such magnitude (with hundreds of locations checked in one day), it was possible that venues checked later in the day had been tipped off to the raids by venues checked earlier in the day. However, police found that many brothel owners and prostitutes seemed surprised even later in the day. Thiel and Meyer told us police surveillance and raids are effective measures against TIP and said they would continue to use such methods to fight TIP during and after the World Cup.

Police: Fans Unlikely to Frequent Private Apartments

¶5. (SBU) Meyer reported private apartment prostitution will not play a significant role during the World Cup. He claimed fans looking for sexual services would likely go to brothels in the city center,

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which remain under close police surveillance. Foreign fans would find it difficult to access private apartments due to language constraints and unfamiliarity (advertisements for such apartments / escort services usually appear in classified ads in local newspapers). Meyer acknowledged street prostitution remains a major challenge for police during the World Cup.

NGOs

¶6. (SBU) NGOs such as Frankfurt-based FIM (Frauenrecht ist Menschenrecht/Women's Rights are Human Rights) and Franka tell us they are pleased on the whole with police efforts and cooperation, but that raids tend to focus resources in areas of legal prostitution (see ref A). Pointing to the relatively low number of arrests in northern Hesse (11), Franka's Barbara Dierichs said she suspects some brothels were tipped off before the raid, but noted police had success in outlying establishments not normally under surveillance (which were caught off guard).

Controversial NGO Dona Carmen Criticizes Raids

¶7. (SBU) Dona Carmen, a controversial Frankfurt-based NGO that works closely with prostitutes in Germany and supports their efforts to organize, was critical of the raids and similar police operations. Dona Carmen spokesperson Juanita Henning told us "oversized raids" like the ones in Hesse further stigmatize and isolate prostitutes, damaging legitimate efforts to assist TIP victims. Citing German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (BKA) sources, Henning stated 99.5% of all prostitutes in Germany work legally and that large-scale "show" raids mostly just harass legal prostitutes. She called upon the German government to grant full legal status to foreign prostitutes working in Germany to enable them to receive social benefits. (NOTE: While Dona Carmen has extensive contacts among prostitutes -- particularly long-time sex workers -- it is somewhat isolated among German NGOs in the sector. END NOTE.)

¶8. (U) This message was coordinated with Embassy Berlin.

